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EXPEDITION
OF THE
SIEUR DE CHAMPLAIN

AGAINST THE
ONONDAGAS IN 1615

COMPRISING AN INQUIRY INTO THE ROUTE OF THE EXPEDITION, AND
THE LOCATION OF THE IROQUOIS FORT WHICH WAS BESIEGED.

COMMUNICATED TO THE N. Y. HISTORICAL SOCIETY OCT. 1875

BY

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CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

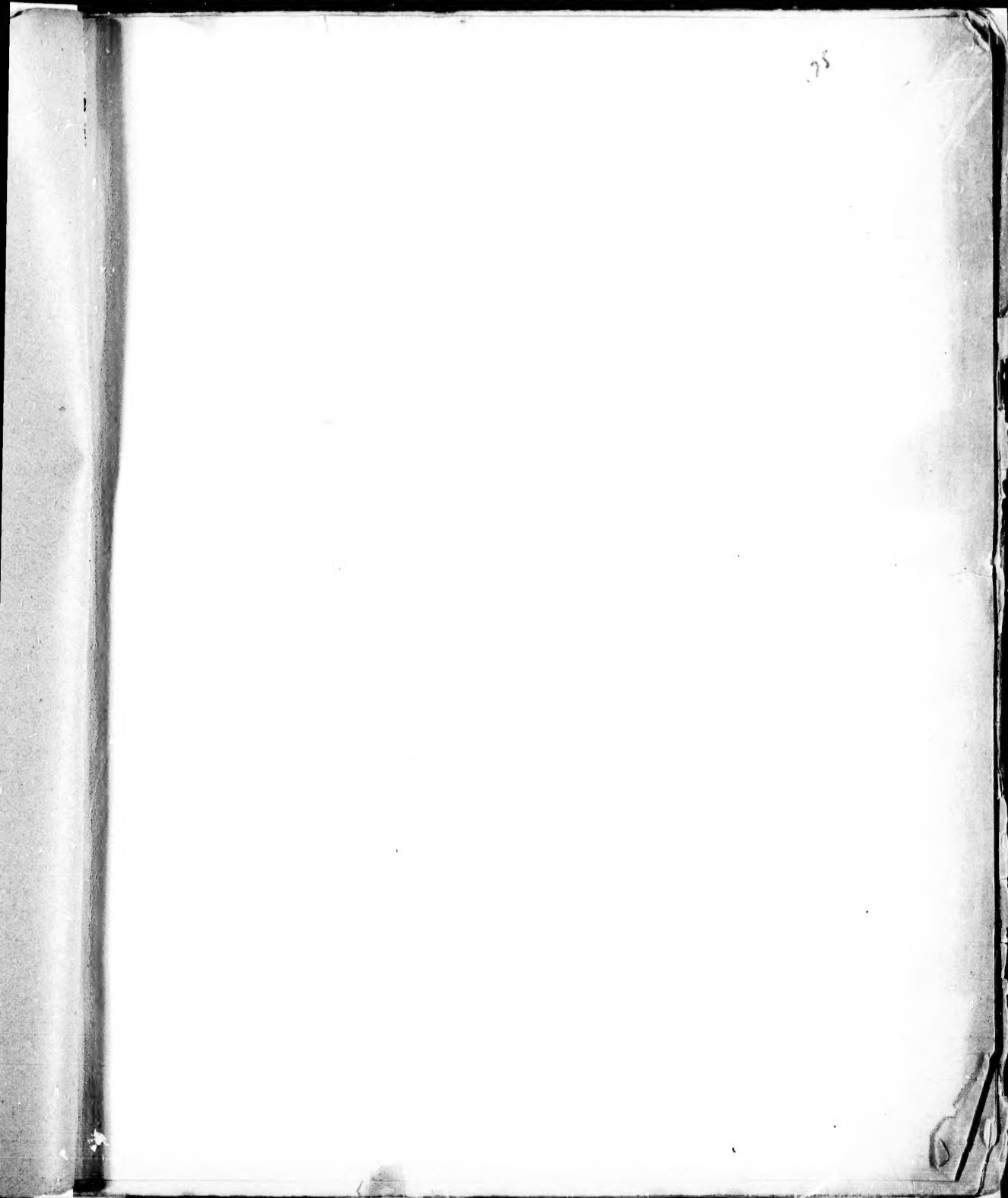
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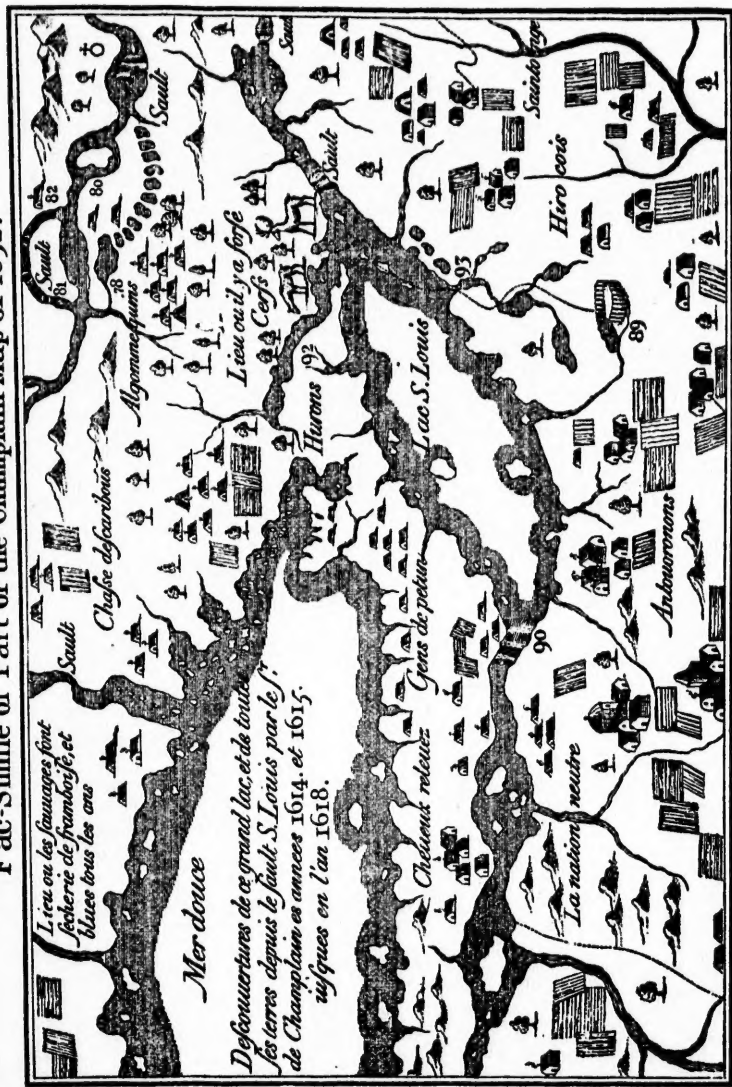
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Fac-Simile of Part of the Champlain Map of 1632.



EXPLANATION.

The map prefixed is a photo-lithographic fac-simile of the original which accompanies the edition of the Voyages of Champlain in New France, printed at Paris, in 1632.

The numbers 89, 90, 93 appear in the original, and are thus explained in a table annexed :

89. Village renfermé de 4 pallisades ou le Sieur de Champlain fut à la guerre contre les Antouhonorons, où il fut pris plusieurs prisonniers suavages.

Translation: Village enclosed within 4 palisades, where the Sieur de Champlain was during the war upon the Antouhonorons, and where numerous savages were made prisoners.

90. Sault d'eau au bout du Sault Saint Louis fort hault où plusieurs sortes de poissons descendans s'estourdissent.

Translation: A waterfall of considerable height, at the end of the Sault St. Louis, where several kinds of fish are stunned in their descent.

93. Bois des Chastaigniers où il y a forces chastaignes sur le bord du lac S. Louis et quantité de prairies, vignes et noyers.

Translation: Woods of chestnut trees, with abundance of chestnuts and extensive meadow lands, with vines and walnut trees on the border of Lake St. Louis.



CHAMPLAIN'S EXPEDITION AGAINST THE ONONDAGAS IN 1615.

IN the year 1615, there dwelt on the south-eastern shore of Lake Huron, between Lake Simcoe and the Georgian Bay, a nation of Indians who were called in their own language, "Wendats," or "Wyandots," and by the French "Hurons." There is no record of their having been visited by the white man prior to the above date. In the same year, the Sieur de Champlain, the Father of French colonization in America, who had entered the St. Lawrence in 1603 and founded Quebec five years later, ascended the river Ottawa as far as the Huron country—Le Caron, the Franciscan, having preceded him by a few days only. These adventurous pioneers were seeking, in their respective spheres, and by concurrent enterprises, the one to explore the western portions of New France, and the other to establish missions among the North American Indians.

The Hurons and their Algonkin allies who dwelt on the Ottawa, being at that time engaged in a sanguinary war with the confederated Iroquois tribes south of Lake Ontario, persuaded Champlain to join them in an expedition

which they were projecting into the territories of their enemy. The combined forces set out from Ca-i-ha-gué, the chief town of the Hurons, situated between the river Severn and Matchedash Bay, on the first day of September, 1615.¹

Crossing Lake Simcoe in their bark canoes, they made a short portage to the headquarters of the river Trent, and descended in its zigzag channel into Lake Ontario. Passing from island to island in the group which lies in the eastern extremity of that lake, they safely reached its southern shore, and landed in the present State of New York. Concealing their canoes in the adjacent woods, they started overland for their Iroquois enemies.

In an account of this expedition, read before the New York Historical Society in March, 1849, and published in its Proceedings for that year,² I endeavored to establish the precise point where the invaders landed, the route which they pursued, and the position of the Iroquois fort which they besieged. The fact that Champlain had, at that early day, visited the central part of the State of New York, seemed to have been overlooked by all previous writers, and was deemed to be an interesting topic for historical investigation. Taking for my guide the edition of Champlain's works published in 1632, the only one then accessible,³ I became satisfied on a careful study

¹ Champlain's voyages. Edition of 1632, p. 251.

² Proceedings for 1849, p. 96.

³ The first account of the expedition was published in 1619.

of the text alone, the map being lost, that the expedition landed at or near Point de Traverse, now called "Stony Point," in Jefferson county, and from thence proceeded in a southerly direction, and after crossing the Big and Little Sandy creeks and Salmon and Oneida rivers, reached the Iroquois fort on Onondaga Lake. I fully stated these conclusions in the communication above referred to, and they were approved and adopted by several of our American historians.¹ Other writers, however, of equal note and authority, locate the fort as far west as Canandaigua lake.²

In view of these considerations, I have been led to re-examine the subject, aided by additional sources of information, particularly by the late Abbé Laverdières recent edition of all of Champlain's works. My present purpose is to state, briefly, the result of that re-examination, and the additional grounds upon which I adhere to my former conclusions, I will first, for convenient reference, give a literal translation of that part of Champlain's narrative which relates to the question. It is taken from the edition of 1619, which differs in a few unimportant particulars from that of 1632. After describing the voyage until their embarkation near the eastern end of Lake Ontario,

¹ Brodhead's History of New York, Vol. I, p. 69; Clark's History of Onondaga, Vol. I, p. 253; Shea's edition of Charlevoix's New France, Vol. II, p. 28, note.

² O'Callaghan's Doc. Hist. of New York, Vol. III, p. 10, note; Ferland's Cours D'Histoire du Canada, p. 175; Parkman's Pioneers of New France, p. 373; Laverdière's Works of Champlain, p. 528, note.

a synopsis of which has already been given, our historian says :—¹

“ We made about fourteen leagues in crossing to the other side of the Lake, in a southerly direction, towards the territories of the enemy. The Indians concealed all their canoes in the woods near the shore. We made by land about four leagues, over a sandy beach, where I noticed a very agreeable and beautiful country, traversed by many small streams, and two small rivers which empty into the said Lake. Also many ponds and meadows, abounding in an infinite variety of game, numerous vines, and fine woods, a great number of chestnut trees, the fruit of which was yet in its covering. Although very small, it was of good flavor. All the canoes being thus concealed, we left the shore of the Lake, which is about eighty leagues long and twenty-five wide, the greater part of it being inhabited by Indians along its banks, and continued our way by land about twenty-five or thirty leagues. During four days we crossed numerous streams and a river issuing from a Lake which empties into that of the *Entouhonorons*. This Lake, which is about twenty-five or thirty leagues in circumference, contains several beautiful islands, and is the place where our Iroquois enemies catch their fish, which are there in great abundance. On the 9th of October, our people being on a scout, encountered eleven Indians whom they took prisoners, namely, four women, three

¹ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 526.

boys, a girl, and three men, who were going to the fishery, distant four leagues from the enemies' fort. * * The next day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived before the fort. * * * Their village was enclosed with four strong rows of interlaced palisades, composed of large pieces of wood, thirty feet high, not more than half a foot apart and near an unfailing body of water.

* * * We were encamped until the 16th of the month. * * * As the five hundred men did not arrive,¹ the Indians decided to leave by an immediate retreat, and began to make baskets in which to carry the wounded, who were placed in them doubled in a heap, and so bent and tied as to render it impossible for them to stir, any more than an infant in its swaddling clothes, and not without great suffering, as I can testify, having been carried several days on the back of one of our Indians, thus tied and imprisoned, which made me lose all patience. As soon as I had strength to sustain myself, I escaped from this prison, or to speak plainly, from this hell.

"The enemy pursued us about half a league, in order to capture some of our rear guard, but their efforts were useless and they withdrew. * * * * The retreat was very tedious, being from twenty-five to thirty leagues, and greatly fatigued the wounded, and those who carried them, though they relieved each other from time to time.

¹ A reinforcement they were expecting from the Carantouanais, who lived on the sources of the Susquehanna.

On the 18th considerable snow fell which lasted but a short time. It was accompanied with a violent wind, which greatly incommoded us. Nevertheless we made such progress, that we reached the banks of the Lake of the *Entouhonorons*, at the place where we had concealed our canoes, and which were found all whole. We were apprehensive that the enemy had broken them up."¹

I will now proceed to examine the reasons which have been assigned in favor of locating the Iroquois fort on or west of Canandaigua Lake. They are three-fold, and founded on the following assumptions: 1st. That the *Entouhonorons*, whose territory was invaded, were the *Senecas*, then residing on the west of Canandaigua Lake.² 2d. That the route, as laid down on the map of Champlain, which is annexed to the edition of 1632, indicates that the fort was on Canandaigua Lake, or on a tributary of the Genesee river, and consequently in the *Seneca* country.³ 3d. That the distances traveled by the expedition, as stated by Champlain, prove that the extreme point he reached must have been in the *Seneca* country.⁴

I will notice these propositions in their order. 1st. In regard to the identity of the *Entouhonorons* with the

¹ Champlain's Voyages, Ed. 1632, Part I., pp. 254-263. Laverdière's Reprint of the Narrative of 1619, pp. 38-48.

² Laverdière's Champlain, Vol. 1, p. 521, n. 1. Parkman's Pioneers, p. 373, n.

³ O'Callaghan, in Doc. Hist. N. Y., Vol. 1, p. 10, n. Parkman's Pioneers, p. 373.

⁴ Laverdière's Champlain, Vol. 1, p. 518, n.

Senecas. One of the arguments urged in favor of this identity is based on the similarity of name, the Senecas being called "*Sonontoerrhonons*" by the Hurons. But the latter called the Onondagas "*Onontaerrhonons*," which bears quite as strong a resemblance to *Entouhonorons* as the name they applied to the Senecas. It may be stated here that O'Callaghan, Parkman, Ferland, and Laverdière, each called the tribe in question "*Entouhonorons*," whereas, Champlain, in all the editions of his works, refers to them invariably as "*Entouhonorons*." He never calls them "*Entouhonorons*" in his *text*. On the *map* annexed to the edition of 1632, they are named "*Antouoronons*," but in the *index* to the map, "*Antouhonorons*."¹ It must, therefore, have been from the map, and not from the text, that the word "*Entouhonorons*" was derived. The other name, as uniformly given by Champlain in his text, we must assume to be correct, in preference to the solitary entry on the map.²

It is supposed by some that the edition of 1632, which contains the map, and is composed of his previous publications, was not the work of Champlain, and never passed

¹ Laverdière's Champlain, Vol. 2, p. 1392.

² If it be assumed that the terminations "*ronons*" and "*norons*" are identical, and mere suffixes, signifying, in the Huron language, "people," see Father Bruya's Mohawk Dictionary, p. 18, then, if those terminations are dropped from each of the three words, they will respectively become "*sonontoe*," "*onontae*," and "*entouho*," and represent the names of the *places* where those nations resided. Now it cannot be said that there is any stronger resemblance between *sonontoe* and *entouho*, than between *onontae* and *entouho*.

under his personal supervision. It is asserted that it was compiled by his publisher, Claude Collet,¹ to whose carelessness the error in the name, as contained on the map, may be attributed. There was no map annexed to the edition of 1619, and the one which accompanied that of 1632 was not constructed until seventeen years after the date of the expedition, as appears from a memorandum on its face. It may not have been compiled from authentic data. One of the discrepancies between it and the text is its location of the "*Antouoronons*," not at the Iroquois fort, but a long distance west of it, thus making a distinction between them and the Iroquois who were living at the fort that is wholly unwarranted by anything contained in the narrative. It is also worthy of note, that the map is not once referred to by Champlain in his text. Not only was it constructed after all his narratives were written, but the index to it was evidently added by some other hand. Another argument urged in favor of the identity of the *Entouhonorons* with the Senecas has been drawn from the existence of a nation, called by Champlain "*Chountouaroïon*," which is undoubtedly a misprint for "*Chonontouaronon*."² They are described as living between the Hurons of Canada, and the *Carantouanais* (or

¹Harrisse. *Bibliographie de la N. France*, p. 66. See also Laverdière's *Champlain*, pp. 637-8.

²Shea's *Charlevoix*, Vol. 2, p. 28, n. The letters "n" and "u" occur frequently in Indian names, and it is quite difficult to distinguish the one from the other in manuscript. Their being often mistaken for each other occasions numerous typographical errors.

Andastes), on the Susquehanna.¹ Champlain says that, "in going from the one to the other, a grand detour is necessary, in order to avoid the *Chonontouaronons*, which is a very strong nation."² From the name and location, they can be no other than the Senecas.

The Abbé Laverdière assumes that the *Chouontouaronons* and *Entouhonorons* are one and the same people.³ This cannot be true, for Champlain mentions them both in almost the same sentence, and gives to each their respective names, without a hint of their identity.⁴ Indeed, Laverdière, in support of his theory, is obliged to interpolate a word in the text of Champlain, which is entirely superfluous.⁵ The identity of the *Entouhonorons* with the Senecas, rather than with the Onondagas, cannot therefore be established by any supposed similarity of name.

2d. The next in order for consideration, is the *route* pursued by the expedition, and the *site* of the Iroquois fort, as they are indicated on the map.

A slight examination of the annexed *fac-simile* of that portion of the original map, which relates to this expedition, will show it to be wholly unreliable as a guide in any investigation of Champlain's route. It is incorrect in

¹ Jesuit Relation for 1648. Quebec Reprint, pp. 46-48.

² Laverdière's Champlain, p. 522.

³ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 521, note 1.

⁴ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 909-910.

⁵ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 522, note 1.

most of its details. Although the original exhibits the general outlines of Lakes Ontario and Huron, Lake Erie is almost entirely ignored, an irregular strait, bearing little resemblance to it, being substituted. Lake Ontario, as shown by the *fac-simile* is erroneously represented as containing several islands scattered along its northern and southern shore, and the Niagara river as running due east into its westernmost extremity. The Great Falls are located at the very mouth of the river. Everything is distorted, and in some places it is scarcely recognizable. The supposed route of Champlain is indicated by a *dotted line*, which, crossing Lake Ontario along a chain of imaginary islands, nearly opposite the mouth of the Oswego river, strikes the southern shore at that point. All evidence that the expedition traversed the "sandy beach" which stretches along the Lake shore, south of Stony Point, as referred to in the text, *is entirely omitted*. From the mouth of the Oswego, the line pursues a southerly direction, and after crossing what appears to be the present Seneca river, and another stream, passes between two lakes directly to the Iroquois fort. This route, as thus shown by the *map*, is highly improbable, unnecessarily circuitous, and cannot possibly be reconciled with the text of Champlain.¹ If the expedition had gone as far

¹ In the *fac-simile* of Champlain's map, published by Tross, in Paris, the dotted line, where it should cross Lake Ontario, as shown by the original map, is omitted. The same portion of the line is also wanting in the *fac-simile* published by Dr. O'Callaghan, in Vol. III. of the Documentary History of New York, and by Laver-

west as Canandaigua lake, Champlain would have passed near to, and have become acquainted with, the existence of no less than eight of those remarkable inland sheets of water which form so conspicuous a feature in the scenery of central New York, not to mention three others a little further west. Only five lakes are indicated on the map, and none are mentioned in the narrative, except Oneida Lake and the one on which the fort was situated. They would certainly have been as worthy of description as the "sandy beach," "the beautiful wooded country," "the numerous streams," the Oneida "lake and river," and "the small lake," adjacent to the Iroquois fort, which were met with on the route and noticed in the narrative.

3d. It is urged, as an additional argument against the location of the Iroquois fort in the Onondaga country, that the distance of "twenty-five or thirty leagues," stated by Champlain to have been traveled by the invaders after they had landed, as well in going to as in returning from the fort, necessarily indicates that they must have gone at least as far west as Canandaigua Lake. It may be said that in stating this distance, Champlain intended to exclude the "four leagues" which they traveled over "a sandy beach," immediately after they had concealed their canoes, thus making from twenty-nine to thirty-four leagues in all. But this cannot be a fair con-

dière, in his recent edition of Champlain's works. The islands in the eastern end of Lake Ontario, as represented on the original map, are also entirely omitted on Dr. O'Callaghan's *fac-simile*.

struction of his language. He says, "We made about fourteen leagues in crossing the lake in a southerly direction. The Indians concealed all their canoes in the woods near the shore. We traveled by land some four leagues over a sandy beach." A little further on he continues: "All the canoes being concealed, we proceeded by land about twenty-five or thirty leagues during four days." He thus includes the "four leagues" in the four days' travel of "twenty-five or thirty leagues."

The above construction is justified by the further statement, that the same distance of "twenty-five or thirty leagues" was traveled by the expedition on its *return* from the fort to the canoes, referring to the *whole* distance. "The retreat," he says, "was very tedious, being from twenty-five to thirty leagues, and greatly fatigued the wounded and those who bore them, although they relieved each other from time to time." Yet this retreat must have been accomplished in *two days*, half the time it took to reach the fort from the landing, for he states they were encamped before the fort until the 16th of October, and reached their canoes on the 18th.¹ Charlevoix says they did not stop during their retreat²—a physical impossibility, certainly, if they had started from a point as far west as Canandaigua Lake. This assertion of Charlevoix does not appear to be warranted by the narrative of Champlain.

¹ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 526.

² Charlevoix's N. France, Vol. I., p. 241. Edition of 1744.

Those writers who, relying on the map, locate the fort on Canandaigua Lake, lose sight of the fact that it discharges its waters into Lake Ontario through the Clyde, Seneca and Oswego rivers, whereas the map places the fort on a stream which empties into Lake Ontario at a point much further west. In considering the question of *distance*, it must be borne in mind, that the attacking party was on foot, advancing cautiously towards a formidable enemy, in a hostile and unexplored country, destitute of roads and abounding in dense forests, numerous rivers and miry swamps. Under such circumstances, incumbered as they were with their implements of war and other effects, their progress must have been slow. The distances which are given by Champlain, being measured only by time, are consequently over-estimated. On their retreat, they had become more familiar with the country, and under the stimulus of an enemy in the rear, accomplished their return with much greater rapidity. From Stony Point where they landed, to Onondaga Lake, following in part the beach of Lake Ontario, is fifty-three miles, by the *shortest possible line*, as measured on a reliable map. But it would have been impossible for such an expedition to pursue so direct a course, owing to the necessity of moving circumspectly, and of seeking the most convenient and practicable route through an unknown wilderness. It would not be unreasonable to deduct at least one-fifth from the number of leagues stated by Champlain, in order to arrive at the actual air line distance between the place where he landed and the Iroquois

fort.¹ If, therefore, we take one-fifth from twenty-seven and a half leagues, which is the mean of the two distances given by Champlain, it will leave twenty-two leagues, or fifty-three and a half miles, as the true distance, measured on an air line. As an example of over-estimates by Champlain himself, reference may be had to the width of Lake Ontario, which he says is "twenty-five leagues," an

¹ Champlain's distances are stated in "leagues." Several, differing in length, were used by the French, under that name. Among them were the "*lieue de poste*" of $2\frac{4}{100}$ English miles — the "*lieue moyenne*" of $2\frac{7}{100}$ English miles, and the "*lieue géographique*" of $3\frac{3}{100}$ English miles. It is important, in discussing this question, to determine the length of the one used by Champlain. Neither his narrative, nor his map of 1632, affords any light on the subject. There is inscribed on a map published in Paris in 1664, entitled: "Le Canada fait par le Sr. de Champlain * * suivant les Mémoires de P. du Val," a scale of *Lieues Francaises chacune de 2,500 pas géométriques.*" It is fair to presume that the length of the league as given on this map is identical with the one used by Champlain. As a geometrical pace is $1\frac{6}{100}$ French metres, or $3\frac{2}{100}$ English feet, it follows that Champlain's league must be $2\frac{5}{100}$ English miles, differing slightly from the length of the *lieue de poste* as above stated. This conclusion would account for the discrepancy which has arisen from calling the old French league equivalent to three English miles. The English miles, stated in the text, have been computed on the basis of two and a half to a French league. Even if there were three, it would not change the result, or carry the expedition west of Onondaga Lake. By reckoning the league as equivalent to two and a half miles, many supposed discrepancies of early French travelers in America are reconciled, and their over-estimates of distances explained.

excess of one-fifth.¹ Also to the circumference of Oneida Lake, which he states at twenty-five or thirty leagues," an excess of one-fourth. Numerous other examples might be cited.

It may be interesting, in this connection, to compare Champlain's statement with those of the Jesuit Dablon, who traveled twice over the same route in 1655 and 1656, under much more favorable circumstances for correctly estimating the distances. He informs us that, in company with Father Chaumonot, he left Montreal on the 7th day of October, 1655, for the Onondaga country, and reached "*Otihatangué*" (the mouth of Salmon river) by canoe on the 29th of the same month.² That he landed the next day, and prepared to go on foot to *Onondaga*. That on the first day of November, after going "*five good leagues*," he encamped for the night on the banks of a small stream. Early the next day he continued his journey for "*six or seven leagues*" and encamped for the night in the open air. On the third, before sunrise, he resumed his way, and reached "*Tethi-roguen*," which he describes as "a river which issues from Lake *Goienho*" (Oneida Lake), and "remarkable as a rendezvous for a great number of fishermen." Here he passed the night in an Indian cabin. The distance traveled this day is not stated, but we may assume it to have been six leagues, which is about the average of the other days. On the fourth he went "*about six leagues*,"

¹ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 527.

² Relation of 1656, p. 7. Quebec edition.

and passed the night in an "open country," "*four leagues*," from Onondaga. On the fifth of November he reached the latter place,¹ having spent five days in traveling from the mouth of Salmon river, a distance, according to the narrative, of twenty-seven and a-half leagues. Inasmuch, however, as the Iroquois fort is claimed to have been on Onondaga Lake, five leagues north of the ancient village of Onondaga,² which the Jesuit reached on the fifth of November, the said five leagues should, for the purpose of comparison with Champlain, be deducted from the above twenty-seven and a-half leagues. To the resulting difference should be added, for the same reason, six and a-half leagues, being the distance from Stony Point to the mouth of the Salmon river, thus making, from the said Point to the fort, according to the Jesuit narrative, twenty-nine and a-half leagues, which is a little short of the extreme distance of thirty leagues stated by Champlain.

Leaving *Chaumonot* at Onondaga, *Dablon* set out on his return to Quebec on the second day of March, 1656,³ over nearly the same route, and traveled that day *five leagues*. On the third he rested on account of the rain. On the fourth he traveled *six leagues* to Oneida Lake. Fearing to venture on the thin ice, he spent the next day on its banks. On the sixth, it was sufficiently frozen to enable him to cross at a point where the lake was a league and

¹ Onondaga was situated a few miles south of the present city of Syracuse.

² Jesuit Relation for 1657, p. 14. Quebec edition.

³ Jesuit Relation for 1656, p. 35. Quebec edition.

a-half broad. He reached the mouth of Salmon river on the eighth, a little before noon, consuming in travel, exclusive of detentions, four and a-half days. The rate of progress, after crossing Oneida Lake, is not given, but, estimating six leagues as an average day's travel, would make twenty-six leagues from the Onondaga village to the mouth of Salmon river. After allowing the same deductions and additions as in the case of his previous trip, it would leave twenty-seven and a-half leagues, which is the mean of the two distances stated by Champlain. By thus comparing Champlain's estimates with those of the Jesuit, it will be readily seen that the expedition of the former could not possibly have extended west of Onondaga Lake.

Having thus examined the reasons which have been urged in favor of locating the fort in question on Seneca territory, founded on the similarity between the names which the Hurons bestowed on the Iroquois and the *Entouhonorons*, and also the reasons for such location, based on the course of the "dotted line" laid down on Champlain's map, between the point where he landed and the said fort, and on the distances which Champlain states were traveled by him, between the same points, it now remains to state and consider the objections which exist against placing the location of the fort as far west as the Seneca country.

1st. The actual distance between the place of landing and the foot of Canandaigua Lake, measured on the shortest possible line, is ninety-six miles, or thirty-eight and a-half leagues. It would be absurd, however, to

suppose that the expedition could have followed so direct a course. On the contrary, in accomplishing the distance to the fort, it must have passed over, as stated on a previous page, at least one-fifth more than a straight line between the said points. This fact, without allowing anything for Champlain's over-estimate, would, in case the objective point were Canandaigua Lake, make the distance actually traveled at least forty-six leagues, or not less than one hundred and fifteen miles. If, as is claimed by some the fort were still further west, on a tributary of the Genesee,¹ it would add several leagues more to the difficulty. 2d. The design of the expedition was to attack an Iroquois tribe living south of Lake Ontario. The assailants were the Hurons, living on the eastern shore of the lake which bears their name. They started from their principal village, which was situated west of Lake Simcoe, on the borders of the Huron country nearest to the Iroquois.²

Now, if it were their object to attack the Senecas, the shortest and most feasible route to reach them would have been either in a southerly direction around the western extremity of Lake Ontario, through the territory of the friendly Neuter nation, who then lived on both sides of the Niagara, or by canoe directly across the lake, or by coasting along its western shore, landing, in either case,

¹ Laverdière's Champlain, p. 528, note 1.

² Jesuit Relation, 1640, p. 80, Quebec edition. Laverdière's Champlain, p. 518, note 1.

near the mouth of the Genesee river. The fact that the expedition chose the circuitous and toilsome route by the river Trent, through crooked lakes and torturous channels, involving numerous portages, and traveled eastward for the entire length of Lake Ontario, crossing its eastern extremity in search of an enemy on its south side, affords a strong presumption that the enemy thus sought was located near that eastern extremity. 3d. If the object were to attack the Senecas, the Hurons and their allies would hardly have chosen a route which would separate them so far from their canoes, at the risk of being outflanked by the watchful and kindred Iroquois tribes whom they must pass on the way. After crossing the eastern end of Lake Ontario, it would have been much less hazardous and fatiguing to have coasted along its southern shore to Irondequoit bay, from whence the Senecas could easily be reached, as they were by Gallinée in 1669, and by De Nonville in 1687.

Having examined the arguments which have been urged in favor of the location of the Iroquois fort in the country of the Senecas, and noticed a few of the principal objections against it, some of the affirmative proofs, establishing its site on or near Onondaga Lake, remain to be considered.

A careful examination of Champlain's narrative will show that, as before stated, he must have landed on what has been designated as "*Pointe de Traverse*" or "*Stony Point*,"^s in Jefferson county. It is the nearest and most feasible landing from the islands which are

grouped in the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario, and along which the expedition undoubtedly passed before reaching its southern shore.¹ It is well known that from the earliest times the Indians and voyageurs, as they crossed the Lake in rough weather, availed themselves of the protection of those islands. They form a continuous chain, stretching from shore to shore, embracing the Inner Ducks, Outer Ducks, Great Galloo, Little Galloo, Calf and Stony Islands. The distances between them are unequal, in no case exceeding seven miles. The expedition could not easily have landed directly upon the point in question, as it presents a perpendicular rocky bluff, washed at its base by the lake, and forms a bold and insurmountable barrier for some distance in either direction. By passing around the northern extremity of the point, now called "six town point," a safe and sheltered bay is accessible, at the bottom of which is the present harbor of Henderson. This convenient and secluded position was undoubtedly chosen by Champlain and his companions as a favorable point for leaving and concealing their canoes.² Having accomplished their debarkation, the invaders followed, for four leagues in a southerly

¹ Champlain says, "There were large, fine islands on the passage."—*Laverdière's Champlain*, p. 526.

² A natural landing place of rock formation, existed there in olden time, known as the "Indian Wharf." A trail or portage road, 300 rods long, led from the landing to Stony Creek. See French's *N. Y. State Gazetteer*, p. 358. MS. letter of the Hon. Wm. C. Pierrepont, of Pierrepont manor, to the author.

direction, the sandy beach which still borders the lake as far south as Salmon river. It is about six and a-half leagues from Stony Point to that river. The many small streams and ponds mentioned by Champlain can easily be identified by the aid of a correct map. The "two small rivers" are undoubtedly those now known as the Big Sandy creek and Salmon river. The invaders were four days from the time of their landing in reaching the Iroquois fort. The narrative states that after passing the two small rivers above mentioned, "they crossed another issuing from a lake, which empties into that of the *Entouhonorons*."¹ This undoubtedly refers to Oneida river and Lake. "This Lake," says the narrative, "is about twenty-five or thirty leagues in circumference,² contains beautiful islands, and is the place where the Iroquois catch their fish, which are there in abundance." After crossing Oneida river, the scouts encountered and captured a party of Iroquois, "*going to the fishery, distant four leagues from the enemy's fort.*" This locates the fort four leagues south of the outlet of Oneida Lake. The latter point was always a noted resort for Salmon fishery in the early history of the country. It is so referred to in one of *Dablon's Journals* above quoted, and in many other early narratives.

The expedition must have met the party of Iroquois, which included women and children, not far from the fishery and the village, which were only about four

¹ Lake Ontario.

² These dimensions, are, as usual, over-stated.

leagues or ten miles apart. They were probably going from the latter to the former. This was on the 9th of October. *On the next day*, at 3 P. M., they reached the fort. It would have required two or three days more time, and sixty miles more of hard marching, to have arrived at Canandaigua Lake.

It is impossible, from the meagre details given by Champlain, to ascertain the *precise* locality of the fort. He places it near a small lake, and there is no site more probable, nor one which corresponds in more particulars to Champlain's description, than the banks of Onondaga Lake. The late Joshua V. H. Clark, author of the "History of Onondaga," states that traces of an ancient Indian fortification were discovered by the first settlers, on the east side of that lake, near the present village of Liverpool. These may have been the remains of the fort in question. There is reason to believe that Monsieur Dupuis and his companions, including several Jesuit missionaries, occupied the same locality in 1656. It is described by the Jesuits¹ as a beautiful, convenient and advantageous eminence, overlooking Lake Gannentaa (Onondaga Lake) and all the neighboring country, and

¹ On the first settlement of the country, the outlines of a fortification at this point were plainly visible, of which a sketch was made in 1797, by Judge Geddes, then Deputy Surveyor General of New York. A copy is given in the second volume of Clark's Onondaga, page 147. A spring exists, at the present time, near the site of the fort, called Gannentaa Spring.

abounding in numerous fresh water springs.¹ Its distance from the chief village of the Onondagas, where burned from time immemorial the ancient council fire of the Iroquois Confederacy, is stated to be four leagues, which would indicate that its location must have been near Liverpool.

It is also supposed that the *Count de Frontenac* encamped in the same place, when he invaded the Onondaga country in 1696, and that Col. Van Schaick occupied the identical ground while on his expedition against the Onondagas in 1779.² It was a position which undoubtedly commended itself to the sagacious Iroquois as eminently suitable for a defensive structure, and was thus early used for that purpose.

In the discussion of this question, I have endeavored fully and fairly to present the points, and to give due force to the arguments which have been urged in favor of the identity of the *Entouhonorons* with the *Senecas*, and of the location of the Iroquois fort in the territory of the latter. It is submitted that the weight of testimony is decidedly, if not conclusively, against those propositions, and that we must look on the banks of the Onondaga Lake, in the heart of the central canton of the great Iroquois Confederacy, for the site of that rude fortification which, more than two centuries and a half ago, so bravely

¹ Relation 1657, p. 14. Quebec edition.

² Clark's Onondaga, Vol. I, p. 256.

and successfully resisted the allied Hurons and Algonkins of the north-west, aided by Champlain and his firearms, and after repeated assaults and a siege of several days compelled the assailants to abandon the enterprise, and retreat ignominiously from the Iroquois country.



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